

Team Chichester – v – Exeter Diamonds

Premier Squash League – Round 10

Team Chichester's final match of the season, at home, was played against Exeter Diamonds - currently in 2nd place in the PSL League with Chichester 15 points behind in 3rd. Yes, it was mathematically possible to overcome Exeter and reach the semi-finals but it would require a monumental effort from every member of the Chichester squad. Team Chichester is renowned for its great team spirit and competitive, determined nature and on Tuesday night it was no different. The players fought for every point and game and were not going to give up without a fight.

Hannah Wright Davies wasted no time putting the home side 1-up, with a solid, no frills, performance against Rhianne O'Donnell. Hannah dominated the match from the outset although Rhianne (Devon) made it tight in the 3rd; Hannah, nonetheless, came through to win 3.0.

Robbie Temple [WR61], and number 2 string for Chichester, played Exeter's Mathieu Castagnet [WR31] on the glass-back championship court. A massive match ensued with Temple taking first blood winning the first game 11/9. Castagnet then worked his way into the match and kept the pace going to win the second 5/11. In the third Temple got off to a bad start before a tremendous fight back rewarded him with a 12/10 win to take him 2.1 up. In the 4th there was more of the same and it was nip and tuck all the way before Castagnet snatched it 8/11. It was down to the wire and an enthralling decider developed. The match had everything – great retrieving and nick hits together with superb entertaining squash for the packed, and very vocal, gallery (home and away spectators). Both players, in turn, had victory in sight but Temple's ability to hold the ball in the front of the court made all the difference and he came through to steal the 5th, 11/8, to put Chichester 2.0 up. The match lasted 1 hour 16mins.

Olly Pett followed on from Hannah's match and played Joey Barrington. Pett quickly forged a 2.0 lead only to be pegged back by some gritty, indomitable squash from Barrington which brought the match to 2-all and again force a decider. Despite a slow start Pett pulled himself together in the 5th to snatch it 11/9.

Team Chichester had won the match, and was 3.0 ahead, but was this enough? The squad had lost 4 games in those matches; would this decide the outcome?

The next match on the glass-back was between Alex Gough and Exeter's Tim Vail. Vail had the edge throughout the first two games and looked to be in control of the match. At 0.2 down Gough rallied superbly in the third. He moved Vail all around the court and pulled one game back. In the 4th it was neck and neck until Gough pulled away and another deciding 5th game looked possible. Vail, however, rallied better and a couple of very tiring rallies towards the end enabled Vail to pull through 1.3.

3.1 to Chichester.

The final match of the season was between the 2 lefthanders, Chichester's Jon Kemp [WR37] and Exeter's Laurens Jan Anjema [WR13]. Anjema stormed ahead in the first and was winning the battle of the 'lefties' down the backhand wall to take the game 6/11. Kemp retaliated with some great holds and mix of pace to level the score 11/4. In the third Anjema once again forged a lead

and maintained the pressure to take it 5/11. The 4th was a tremendous game with both players playing at the top of their game. Kemp kept mixing the pace and direction whilst Anjema's game was solid down the walls. Kemp reached 10/7, game ball, which would have meant another 5th game decider in this thrilling match was in his sight. A collision between the two players sent Anjema flying and time was subsequently needed to wipe down the floor. Anjema recovered well and clawed his way back to force a tie-break. He eventually won this 13/15.

Chichester won the match 3.2 but ultimately it was not enough to go through to the play-offs. Mike Phillips, Team Manager and Squash & Racketball Professional Coach at the Chichester Racquets & Fitness Club said, "This was the end of an excellent season for Team Chichester which won 7 and lost 3 matches but finally narrowly missing the play-offs. The Team is definitely moving in the right direction."

